1. **Questionnaire – UN-Habitat Responses**

For her next report to the General Assembly 70th session, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living and on the right to non-discrimination in this regard, Ms Leilani Farha, seeks to focus on priority issues for the preparatory discussions towards the development of a New Urban Agenda (UN Conference on Sustainable Urban Development- Habitat III, 2016) from the perspective of the right to adequate housing and related human rights.

In this regard, she aims to outline key issues that require a human rights perspective in their construction and implementation. The Special Rapporteur will also identify, where possible, synergies for States and other relevant actors between the post-2015 Sustainable Development goals and targets, and Habitat III.

In this context, it is essential for the Special Rapporteur to receive contributions and views from Governments participating in these processes. Answers to the following questions would greatly assist the Special Rapporteur in developing her initial views in the lead up to Habitat III:

1. What role will national and international human rights standards on the right to adequate housing play in informing your positions and proposals for Habitat III? Can you please provide concrete examples in this regard?

UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. Further, as part of the UN family, UN-Habitat is mandated to respect, promote, and protect human rights in all of its activities. All of UN-Habitat’s interventions are underpinned by values contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that promote the right to an adequate standard of living, of which the right to adequate housing is a part. UN-Habitat is also a key agency in the implementation of the right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

In early 2013, mainstreaming of human rights was approved as a priority issue by the UN-Habitat Governing Council through its inclusion in the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan, and it was further reaffirmed in Para. 38 of its 2015 ‘Omnibus’ resolution, which “…requests the Executive Director to mainstream human rights within the context of advancing the goals and mandate of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, as set out in the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda, in line with its strategic plan for 2014-19, which states that all cross-cutting issues will be mainstreamed throughout its seven focus areas”. Such directive on mainstreaming thus empowers UN-Habitat to apply international human rights standards and principles to all parts of its work programme.

UN-Habitat will be working with partners to ensure that issue papers and outcomes of Habitat III incorporate human rights standards. For example, the human rights team have provided substantive input into the Habitat III Issues Paper 20 on Housing.

Through conducting legislative reviews for specific countries, UN-Habitat looks at national legislative frameworks and assesses how far they have gone in providing for the right to adequate housing and protection against forced evictions. This forms a basis for UN-Habitat to make proposals to countries to improve their human rights culture and align their national laws with their international law obligations.

2. One aspect for discussion in the context of Habitat III will likely be “social cohesion and housing”. What public policies, programmes or plans are being considering or have been put forward by national or subnational level governments related to “social cohesion” (for example: non-discrimination and equality) and the right to adequate housing? Please specifically reference any policies, programmes or plans aimed at ensuring inclusive housing for disadvantaged groups such as migrants and refugees, women, young people, older people, and people with disabilities in urban centres.

UN-Habitat is currently in the process of mainstreaming human rights and the Human Rights-Based Approach. As such, all projects are reviewed by human rights experts before they are approved. One of the key criteria that is addressed is how well a project is including persons in vulnerable situations. Given our work as a development agency, the communities we work with are usually in vulnerable situations (eg. living in informal housing). However, we are working to ensure that sub-groups in those communities (eg. women, children, minorities etc.) are empowered, enabled to participate and that their rights are fulfilled. This is done through capacity building and participation in the project approval process.

Examples of projects aimed at inclusivity:

1. Coordination of Haiti Shelter Cluster by UN-Habitat (2011)[[1]](#footnote-1), which was geared towards ensuring that all groups affected by the earthquake got equitable shelter, with special attention to vulnerable groups. The project was implemented by UN-Habitat, NGOs from Shelter Cluster, the private sector and other UN agencies.

3. In light of the fact that subnational and local governments play an essential role with respect to the implementation of the right to adequate housing, what plans and procedures does your Government intend to implement to ensure they are engaged in the lead up to Habitat III as well as with respect to the implementation of commitments coming out of Habitat III?

Following the Special Rapporteur’s Report in October 2014, UN-Habitat is seeking to strengthen its engagement with subnational and local governments, where appropriate. The agency has acknowledged the vital role that these governments play in design and implementation of policy that impacts the people. We are working to build global capacity of sub-national governments and are engaging with partners such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) to reinforce our message.

UN-Habitat will continue to promote participation from state and non-state actors in its projects. The nature of our programmes is inclusive. An example is the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme which helps countries to implement the right to adequate housing. The programme was launched in 2008 as a joint effect of the African Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, UN-Habitat and the European Commission. The programme has reached out to 160 cities so far and improved the lives of slum dwellers in 38 countries.

The Programme promotes participation from national and local governments. In Uganda,[[2]](#footnote-2) for instance, the implementing partner for the Slum upgrading programme is the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development. The programme was rolled out in three cities, Mbale, Mbarara and Kitgum. The local government in the three cities are instrumental in implementing the program on the ground.

4. What interesting or unique housing policies, programs or good practices consistent with the human right to housing does your Government intend to highlight through the Habitat III process? Please provide examples both from local, subnational or national levels of government, and, if applicable, from non-government actors as well.

UN-Habitat will be highlighting the importance of participation throughout the project cycle. This includes a necessary amount of funding allocation and monitoring and evaluation tools. In addition, UN-Habitat will be publishing a study on alternatives to evictions, which will highlight specific cases of good practice in evictions. This will be available in advance of Habitat III to provide governments with examples and guidance.

UN-Habitat has been instrumental in encouraging policy development.

Example: Papua New Guinea[[3]](#footnote-3)

UN-Habitat, in collaboration with the Office of Urbanisation, helped Papua New Guinea developed its first ever National Urbanisation Policy 2010-2030. It should be noted that Papua New Guinea is part of the Pacific Urban Agenda and as part of its obligations; it established the Office of Urbanisation, following the Pacific Workshop on Urban Management in 2003. UN-Habitat is supporting Papua New Guinea to implement its National Urbanisation Policy through projects such the participatory slum upgrading programme. The programme is also geared towards empowering and engaging the community.

5. Please reflect on mechanisms used to monitor compliance with Habitat II (1996) at the national level that have proven effective and, if possible, provide examples. What kind of mechanisms would your Government envisage as part of the monitoring and implementation of Habitat III?

UN-Habitat undertakes a number of monitoring practices. We have developed ‘Urban Profiles’ for a wide-range of states and are currently undertaking the ‘Global Housing Strategy.’ These mechanisms provide states with a broad overview and specific feedback and recommendations for improvement towards meeting the Habitat II goals. We will continue this work for Habitat III. In addition, UN-Habitat will systematically engage in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by partnering with UN-Country Teams to provide feedback and recommendations for States.

UN-Habitat is currently conducting legislative reviews to assess the human rights situation in specific countries, with particular attention to the right to adequate housing. These reviews take into account the Universal Periodic Review of the specific country under review as well as reports by relevant UN agencies.

1. unhabitat.org/haiti/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://unhabitat.org/uganda/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://unhabitat.org/papua-new-guinea/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)